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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Range of tasks of the Division for the Advancement of Women

1. In its resolution 55/71 of 4 December 2000, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly on the full range of tasks of the Division of the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, including those that might arise from the implementation of the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and from the entry into force of the Optional Protocol[1] to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.[2]

2. The full range of tasks of the Division for the Advancement of Women and Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women are contained in subprogramme 2 (Gender issues and advancement of women) of section 9 (Economic and social affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The programme of work has been formulated on the basis of subprogramme 2 of programme 7 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. Subsequent to the formulation of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, the General Assembly, at its twenty-third special session, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", assessed the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[3] identified obstacles and challenges thereto and proposed actions and initiatives to overcome them so as to achieve their full and accelerated implementation. In the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and the entry into force on 22 December 2000, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention were taken into consideration.

* A/56/150.

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Subprogramme 2 (Gender issues and advancement of women) of section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 will be implemented by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and by the Division for the Advancement of Women, which the Special Adviser heads (A/56/6 (sect. 9), para. 9.52).

3. In its resolution 55/71, the General Assembly called upon, inter alia, the relevant entities of the United Nations system within their respective mandates to take effective action to achieve full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly. The activities under subprogramme 2 also reflect the recommendations in that resolution.

4. In addition, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs implements activities under the regular programme of technical cooperation (section 21 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003), in support of the objectives set out in programme 7 (Economic and social affairs) of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, which includes the subprogramme on gender issues and advancement of women. Technical cooperation related to this subprogramme includes advisory services, namely, missions, at the request of Governments, to provide assistance in capacity-building for the enhancement of the participation of women in development and mainstreaming a gender perspective into national policies and programmes, as well as group training.

5. Subprogramme 2 (Gender issues and advancement of women) of section 9 (Economic and social affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 reflects an increase in regular posts owing to the proposed establishment of three new posts (one P-4 human rights officer, one P-2 associate legal officer and one General Service (Other level) secretary) to undertake various tasks related to the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and tasks resulting from the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. An additional increase has been included for non-post resources, such as general temporary assistance during peak workload periods in the establishment of the Optional Protocol. Expenses for additional consultants and expert group meetings are also foreseen in the biennium 2002-2003 and will include studies on the implementation of the Platform of Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly resolutions.[4]

6. Additional resources have been requested to meet the enhanced responsibilities of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women under the Optional Protocol. A five-member working group of the Committee will meet prior to each session to determine the admissibility of communications and make recommendations on their merits. With respect to the inquiry procedure established under the Optional Protocol, it is expected that the Committee will undertake three missions of inquiry annually, each for a period of two weeks.

7. The draft programme of work in the field of gender issues and advancement of women for the biennium 2002-2003 has been considered by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session, in compliance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. By its decision 45/105,[5] the Commission recommended that the Committee for Programme and Coordination, when reviewing the relevant section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002 to 2003, take into consideration the outcome of the discussions of the Commission at its forty-fifth session.[6]

8. Demands placed on the Division are expanding. There has been an increase in the number of activities and output in the Division's core functions of policy analysis and research, substantive servicing of intergovernmental meetings, substantive and technical servicing of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a human rights treaty body, and advisory services and technical cooperation, as well as coordination and outreach. The increased demands stem from the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly and the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which has now been ratified or acceded to by 24 States parties. Other factors that have contributed to the increased workload are: (a) the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention by 22 since 1 September 1995, and the necessity for enhanced servicing of and provision of legal analysis to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women which has met twice a year since January 1997; (b) an increase in the number of requests

for information and training activities; (c) a sustained high level of interest by civil society in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Division since the convening of the Fourth World Conference on Women; and (d) the call for more in-depth coverage and outreach, including through electronic means of communication. Additional tasks include specific activities related to gender mainstreaming under the guidance of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and violence against women, including the launch of an international "zero tolerance" campaign on such violence,[7] and activities with respect to trafficking of women and girls.

9. Efforts are being made in the context of the subprogramme to strengthen national capabilities for enhancing understanding of women's rights and the process of implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and to strengthen national capacity in the conceptualization, formulation and implementation of action-oriented national plans and programmes designed to implement the Platform for Action. The challenge ahead for the Division is to fulfil its mandate, including the new tasks assigned to it as a result of the recommendations of the Assembly at its twenty-third special session, the greater acceptance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 54/4, annex.

[2] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[4] General Assembly resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/3, annex.

[5] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7* (E/2001/27), chap. II, sect. B.

[6] Ibid., annex III.

[7] In accordance with paragraph 87 (b) of the annex to General Assembly resolution S-23/3.